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The English Hackney  
Ancestor of the Modern Show-Horse

## “SHOWING” A HORSE

CAPTAIN HAYES, an English authority on horses, says that when the National Horse Show was established at the Madison Square Garden, and for several years afterwards, popular belief credited the English hackney with exclusive ability to fold his knees and flex his hocks in the extravagant style required to get the ribbons at the Garden. Admirers of the American trotting horse then ridiculed the imported high stepper in unmeasured terms. They little dreamed that in less than a decade they would be cultivating just this type themselves and boasting that their native trotters could ape the fashionable hackney to perfection. For in 1894 some one discovered in John A. Logan's prize-winning stepper, *The Devil's Deputy*, a well-bred trotter disguised as a hackney. This horse defeated Joseph E. Widener's imported hackney mare, *Dorothea*. The disclosure caused quite a stir in the horse world and the winner was regarded as a freak. Shortly afterwards, however, the fact came out that all the high steppers exhibited at the National Horse Show by Charles F. Bates were trotting bred. Since then—say 1895—the trotting bred carriage horse has assumed the show ring and the sale mart. Every champion high stepper of the National Horse Show since that date has been the offspring of a trotting sire, except in a few instances where the blood of the winners was unknown.

From the American point of view the matter may be stated as follows: Amateur drivers of horses in stylish harness found that the rage for these was such, especially after the large exhibits of hackneys had demonstrated the full scope and purpose of the ultra-stylish breed, that the specimens able to beat those already imported were only procurable at prohibitive prices. Therefore they had to depend upon native material, with the result that by 1893 a number of mature American trotting bred horses of the male sex were trained, trimmed and “docked” in readiness for exhibition. As they showed a stylish gait at extreme speed, these horses at once caught the popular fancy and carried all before them. They are higher on the leg than the hackney, slightly longer in body, and show the blood-like character of trotting stallions, which, of course, they were, until properly prepared and trained for the show-ring—and most successfully so. How astonishing it is that horses bred and for years trained for speed on the track or road, and with action adapted especially to that purpose, could be trained in a few weeks or months to perform in stylish, heavy harness in the show-ring!

The hackney, whether as a show-horse or for real work, is of English origin. Carts were but little used up to the end of the eighteenth century, owing to the badness or absence of roads in England. At that time the

hackney was essentially a riding horse which could gallop, trot and stay.

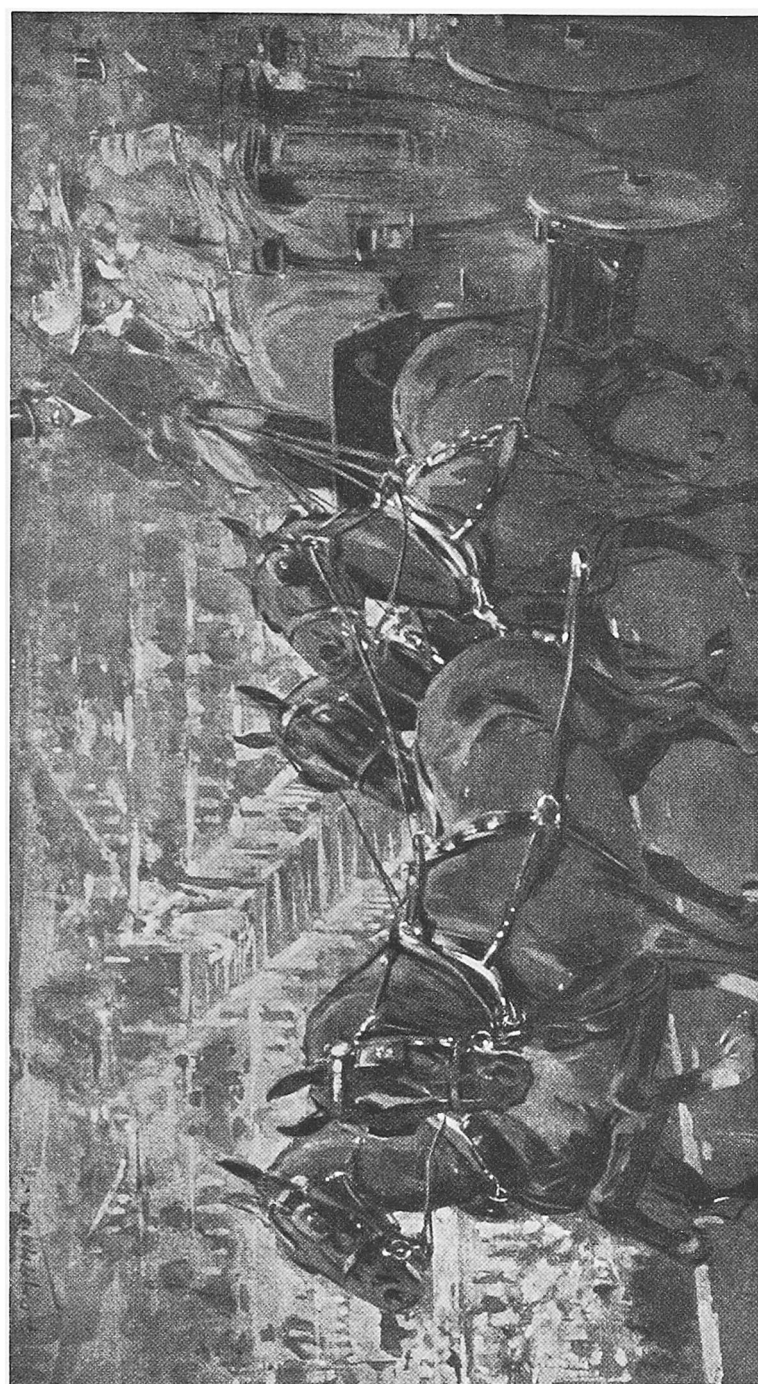
The fashionable height of the hackney, according to Hayes, is about 15.2 and the useful height from about 14.2 to 15.1. A greater height than 15.2 can rarely be obtained without sacrificing type. The usual color is chestnut, and next come bay and brown. Black is rarely seen in this breed. It is an interesting fact that chestnut hackneys are generally better shaped and have more brilliant action than hackneys of other colours; and consequently they form the large majority of winners at shows. But this success of the chestnut colour is not always continued from the show to the sale ring. For many purchasers of harness horses prefer bay or brown, and as a rule they require the animal to be at least 16 hands high. Therefore, colour and height are often serious market objections against show hackneys, especially, in England, in competition with German harness horses.

The hackney of the present showing has been artificially evolved into a show, high-stepping, light-grade horse. In consequence his conformation is not well adapted to saddle work, especially that of the present day. Indeed it requires no expert to see how hacking has steadily decreased in popularity until practically the only civilian saddle horse is the hunter, which, besides being able to carry a rider "on the flat" must have a formation suitable to jumping, which is a form of movement that has no place in the artificial evolution of the hackney into a show horse. The decrease of hacking is such that it is a rare occurrence to meet any one, except grooms at exer-

cise, hacking during the non-hunting or non-showing season. The automobile has taken the place of the horse save with genuine sportsmen—gentlemen riders at the races, and ladies and gentlemen at the hunts; although Central Park still boasts its devotees of the bridle paths. The artificial conditions under which the modern hackney has been developed have naturally not enabled him to successfully bear the privation, hard work and severe climatic exposure for a long period, which, for example, a good military remount would have to endure. The hackney, which is a particularly brilliant light-harness horse for show purposes, would perform his duties fairly well as a fashionable hack, but he has no claim to be a high class hunter; nor can he be regarded as a fast trotter, according to the American standard.

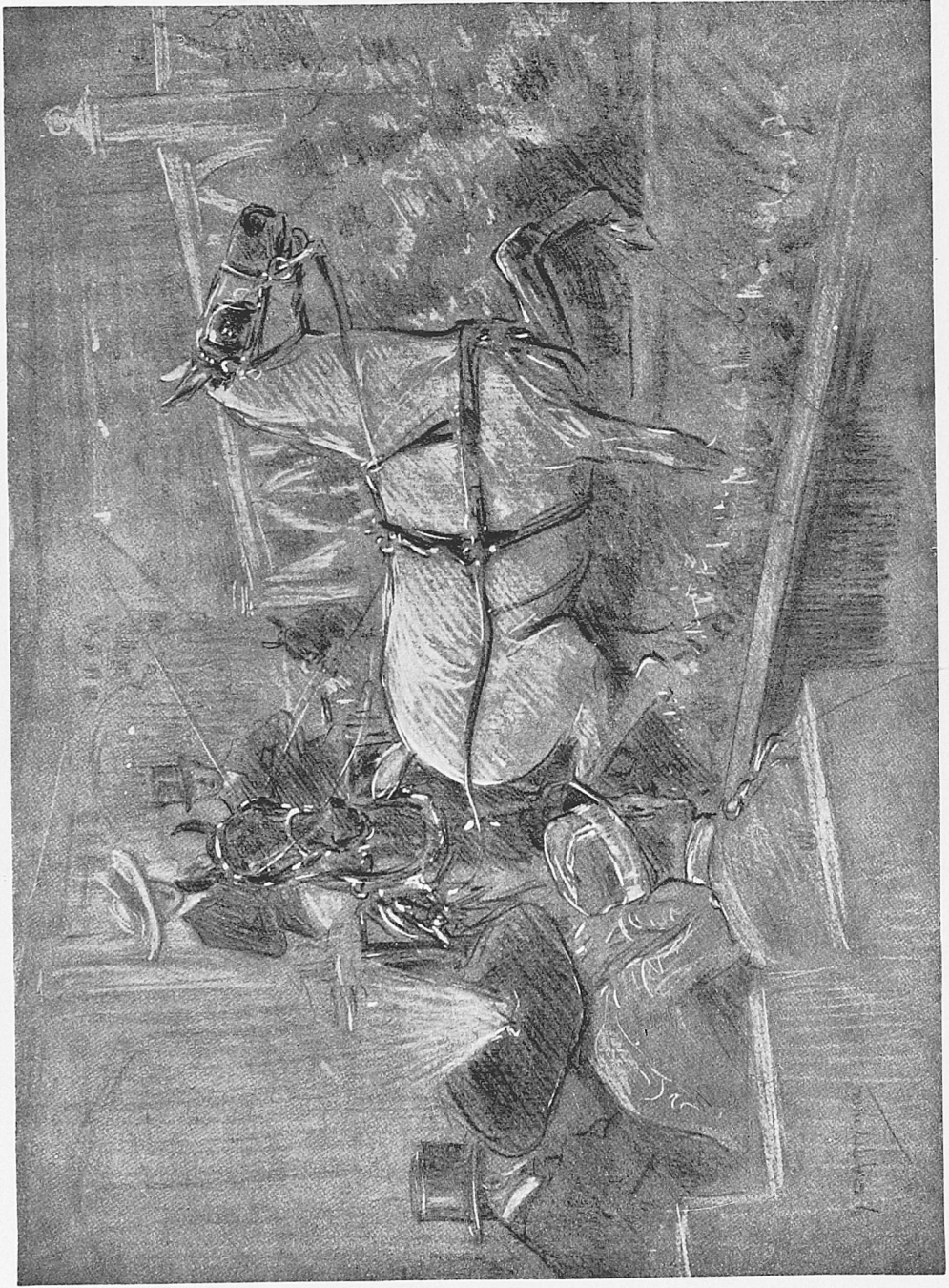
The competition with German horses has been alluded to. Although Germany has several breeds of horses which are suitable for commercial and military purposes, she has until now imported many English horses; for horse-breeding in Germany has been greatly influenced by military requirements. German horses are more or less of the saddle and carriage type, and, as with everything else, the German horse has become a subject of official supervision, during the last few years the German Government and various societies of horse-breeders have greatly encouraged the breeding of good horses; and in many cities the Government exercises a strict supervision over the industry.

East Prussian horses bear somewhat the same relation to other German horses as Irish horses to English. East



FOUR-IN-HAND IN THE SHOW-RING  
PAINTING BY G. D. ARMOUR





TANDEM, OLYMPIA HORSE SHOW, LONDON

DRAWING BY G. D. ARMOUR



Prussia has more horses to the square mile—omitting the larger towns—than any other part of Germany. It is interesting, in view of the German gift for organization, to note that the greatest horse breeding centre of East Prussia, the stud at Trakehnen, was founded in 1732 by Frederick William I., King of Prussia and father of Frederick the Great. He furnished this stud with eleven hundred and one horses from the Royal studs, and the land, which, until it was cleared in 1725, was all “swamp and shrub.” The importation of some Arabs and many English thoroughbreds has greatly improved the East Prussian breed. Count Wrangel, a German authority, says that the Trakehnen horse is a good jumper; has great endurance, a fine head, a well-formed neck, and a strong back; and is well ribbed-up. As a rule, the depth and slope of his shoulders are unsatisfactory to English and American horse lovers, and he is inclined to be rather long on the leg and the legs a little too light for his height. But he has an elegant action that is much admired in carriage horses. Trakehnen horses have not, however, met with much success at English or American shows. Through the influence of the English Hanoverian kings, many English thoroughbreds were sent to Hanover. But the Drenthe horses, bred near Osnabrück, Hanover, originally came from Drenthe in Holland. They are black and they supply London with funeral horses. I do not think either the British capitol, or New York, has an entry for hearses and their draught animals, so that the Drenthe horses, however distinguished they may be for the purpose for which they are bred,

have no blue ribbon awaiting them as winners in the funeral class.

A. H. Godfrey, an American who, if I remember rightly, was one of the founders of the Horse Show and certainly an enthusiastic horseman, wrote an article for *Outing*, in which he speaks of the French and other coach horses. While it is popularly supposed that the French coacher has been “made” and rounded to form in recent years, we must, as a matter of fact, go back to the time of Louis XIV. to get at its inception. During the period of that monarch, demi-sangs (half-bloods) were produced, demi-sang being used in France to designate the French coach horse as distinguished from other races in that country. After the French Revolution, when travel by coach increased, the demand sprang up for stylish coach horses of the trotting variety, and the French Government imported about two thousand stallions. Two hundred and twenty-three of these were from Arabia, and all calculated to beget horses of good size, speed, endurance, and style for coach work. By taking stallions of pleasing exterior, that had proved their abilities at speed tests, and were large without being coarse, the French produced what is claimed to be the highest class heavy coach horse obtainable. The French Government would be apt to select a stallion sixteen hands high, and with action of such tremendous force and speed, that in a ring three hundred and fifty feet long and two hundred and fifty feet wide, a swift pony at full gallop by this horse’s side would have all he could do to keep the rein easy.

The English coacher, the Cleveland bay coach horse, is indigenous to the

vale of Cleveland in Yorkshire, and is of pure race, bay in color, with black points and black “list” along the spinal column. As a breed it ranges in height from sixteen hands to sixteen two and one half; and in weight from one thousand and two hundred to one thousand four hundred and fifty pounds. When found pure, and traced straight to Cleveland blood, it is sound, active and powerful, with great endurance, both for draught to a coach, and for weight, in distance at a certain speed, under the saddle. The largest and heaviest horses of this type have always been favourite coach horses. The more springy and lightly built members of the type were the hunters of days gone by when the heavy hunting squire and heavier farmer were not satisfied without six solid hours in the saddle, over the ground, ploughed and otherwise.

Four-in-hand horses, of the road sort or for park, Mr. Godfrey considers among the most enjoyable to show. They demonstrate what horses of endurance and style are expected to accomplish with a heavy load behind them. An effort is made to secure road teams just level as to height. Some drivers, however, prefer their leaders smaller than wheelers. The horses must show breeding, that is to say, traits of the thoroughbred, especially the lead horses. Wheel horses must show power and substance, put some weight against their collars and be tractable and steady in harness. A typical road coach is painted in brilliant colours and patterned after one or other of the old mail coaches used in the days of old. Sometimes, for effect, a fifth or “cock-horse” is put on ahead of the leaders. This shows how the old road

teams were assisted up long or steep grades or pulled out of deep snow drifts or mud holes. Park teams consist of four stylish horses such as are seen in pairs or singly in various fashionable vehicles. More style and action are required than in a road team but not such a speedy pace.

Originally tandem teams consisted of two thoroughbred horses. The leader really was an extra horse and was designed to help pull a heavy trap and two or more passengers and their belongings—guns, saddles, etc.—a long distance. The lead horse approached a hunter in character. He could, if required, be taken out of harness at the end of the trip, saddled and put after the hounds across any sort of country. The last thing a tandem was supposed to be was a fashionable equipage. It was a gentleman’s way of getting to distant meets or butts. But in time the tandem turnout came to be regarded as a stylish equipage, and the horses somewhat of the “parky” order, the leader especially “peacocky” in style and action and slightly smaller than the wheeler, the latter with more substance, because having to carry the weight “on” and also being obliged to hold steady and follow the leader. His action should not be more than ordinary, high action in the shafts hardly being safe. Tandem driving is a difficult style to become proficient in.

All horses of the park saddle-hack type and of the hunting and jumping stamp should be of thoroughbred character, “and in the park hack manners are of the greatest importance.” The park hack favoured here is of the English type with short mane and tail. It is shown at the walk, trot and canter;

must change its gait at the slightest indication of the reins, be especially smooth at the canter, fairly fast at the gallop, and walk smoothly and fast. "If it cannot do these things easily, stylishly and at the same time carry its rider safely, it is not a park hack, but merely an ordinary riding horse."

The Arabian horse is claimed by many to be the foundation from which sprang the blood of the modern thoroughbred. Nowadays it is included in the thoroughbred department, there not being enough Arabians for separate classes. Many animals show the colour, form, disposition and courage ascribed to Eastern breeds; but the better opinion is that the modern thoroughbred

is responsible for the bloodlike character, courage, brains, speed and endurance of our best horses.

But not all good horses are modelled after the thoroughbred pure and simple. From many types have partially or wholly been eradicated every trace of thoroughbred blood. Trotting-horse breeders claim to have established a race of what is called the "trotting type;" and some breeders of coaching and carriage horses (hackneys, Cleveland bays, etc.) assert that they have produced distinct types, after careful selection and training, their animals tracing directly to foundation stock which was indigenous before the Oriental horse was imported.

